

# TREVITT

R E A L T O R S

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## Selecting an Agent

Are you ready to buy or sell a home? Do you have to do both? If you've decided to have a real estate agent assist you in this process, this article provides valuable information to help you with the important process of selecting an agent.

The first rule of choosing an agent is to use an agent that is an expert on the neighborhood in which you are buying or selling. If you are relocating, then you probably will be working with two agents. What makes a real estate agent an expert (not all of them are experts) is their knowledge of current and past trends on the sale and purchase of all different types of homes (condos, townhouses, single family) in a given community, in addition to knowing all the local facts relevant to your home selection. That means they should be aware of community information, schools, taxes, resale trends and other pertinent data.

Good agents also have knowledge of the home market in the community. What is the typical sales price for a home like yours? How much does the type of home you are looking for typically cost? The agent who is listing your home should be able to do a market analysis of your home and provide a detailed history of sales trends that lead him/her to recommend an asking price for your home. An agent who is helping you search for a new home should be able to give you a breakdown of homes in your price range and where they are located.

The key to an expert agent being able to service you well is their communications skills. Agents should do a lot of listening and ask a few key questions. An effective agent needs to understand your current financial situation, your needs for purchasing a home and your needs for selling a home.

It is important to remember that good communication is a two-way street. You need to be open and honest with an agent to save both of you time and effort. If you aren't looking to buy or sell for an extended period of time (three months or longer), be up-front about that. Also be up-front about your financial situation. If you are a first time homebuyer and only have three percent down for a home, let your agent know that. You will be surprised at how innovative an agent can be in helping you find solutions to your problems.

The final criteria for an expert agent is his/her ability to use technology to help you with your home sale or home search. An expert agent will be able to utilize

electronic multiple listing services to gather information on housing availability for you. An agent can also give you a list of Internet resources to help you investigate on your own and provide you with information on your options in a timely fashion. An expert agent is also familiar with how to utilize modern communications to market your home for sale.

A key piece to having an expert agent work for you is integrity. How honest is an agent in dealing with you? Base your selection of a listing agent on their ability to market your home effectively and can prove that track record. Don't select an agent based on the claim they will be able to get you the highest price.

So how do you determine if an agent is expert and honest? Ask friends or family members for recommendations based on personal experience, ask the relocation director of a real estate firm to assign an agent that matches your needs.

Consider these points:

- Is the agent an expert in the geographical area you are looking to buy or the area in which you are selling?
- How long has he/she been in the real estate business and how long with his/her current company?
- Find out how many homes the agent has listed in the area in which you are seeking to buy. Find out how long it took for each of those homes to sell and close. Ask how the final sale prices compared to the listing prices.
- Ask for references of clients the agent has serviced in the last six months and then actually call those references (get at least three references). Ask those references how effective the agent was at servicing them. Would they use the agent again?
- The agent should also be able to produce a list of on-line and community resources to help you profile a community. Meet the agent in his/her office to see if you feel comfortable. Do you feel he/she is well suited to represent you for your home sale or purchase? If not, choose another agent.